

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07  
IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01  
SAJ-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /090 W  
-----061439Z 092099 /47

R 061413Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4461

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 00264

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR: LEBER RADIO INTERVIEW

REF: BONN 00052 DTG 031650Z JAN 77

1. IN A RADIO INTERVIEW WITH DEUTSCHE WELLE ON  
JAN. 5 REPORTED BY THE PRESS TODAY, DEFMIN LEBER  
INDICATED, CONTRARY TO THE CHANCELLOR'S VIEW, THAT NO  
NEW MBFR INITIATIVE WAS PRESENTLY NECESSARY IN VIENNA.  
HE SAID MBFR WAS STILL AT AN EARLY STAGE. EVEN WITH A  
NEW INITIATIVE, LEBER CONTINUED, THE FRG SHOULD, FIRST  
OF ALL, NOT TALK ABOUT IT PUBLICLY AND, SECOND, SHOULD  
DISCUSS IT WITH THE ALLIANCE PARTNERS. HE ALSO SAID  
HE WAS AGAINST THE GERMANS "GOING IT ALONE,"  
EMPHASIZING THE COMMON ALLIANCE POSITION IN VIENNA.

2. AS FOR WILLY BRANDT'S SUGGESTION ABOUT "NATIONAL  
REDUCTIONS", LEBER DEFENDED THE SPD CHAIRMAN BY SAYING  
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THAT BRANDT WAS NOT THINKING OF PUBLICIZING FRG  
ADVANCE CONCESSIONS. RATHER IT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO MOVE  
THE TALKS A SMALL STEP FORWARD BY A POLITICIAN WHO BORE  
NO GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY. LEBER ADDED THERE WAS  
"NO DISSENT" HERE WITH BRANDT.

3. COMMENT: LEBER, WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE

DEC. 20 BUNDESTAG DEBATE ON MBFR BECAUSE HE WAS STILL CONVALESCING, HAS NOW ADDED HIS VOICE TO THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION IN THE FRG ON MBFR. THE DEFENSE MINISTER TRIED, SIMULTANEOUSLY, TO SUPPORT THE ALLIANCE POSITION AND TO PUT THE BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON BRANDT'S PREVIOUS STATEMENTS. A SENIOR FMOD OFFICIAL HAS TOLD US THAT, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, LEBER WAS EXPRESSING HIS PERSONAL OPINION ON MBFR AND HAD NOT DISCUSSED THE MATTER BEFOREHAND WITH BRANDT.

AS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE NATO ALLIANCE, LEBER EXPECTEDLY QUASHED THE IDEA OF THE GERMANS GOING IT ALONE AND UNDERLINED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE COMMON WESTERN POSITION. LEBER HAS ALWAYS TAKEN THE LONG VIEW ON MBFR, AND HIS COMMENT THAT MBFR WAS ONLY AT AN EARLY STAGE WAS CONSISTENT WITH HIS PAST VIEW.

LEBER'S REMARKS APPEAR TO PUT HIM IN GENSCHER'S CAMP (REFTEL). THE CHANCELLOR, WITH HIS CALL FOR AN UNDEFINED NEW INITIATIVE, REMAINS SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN THE TWO MINISTERS AND BRANDT. WHILE LEBER INDICATED THAT THERE WAS NO "DISSENT" WITH BRANDT, THERE IS OBVIOUSLY A MARKED DIVERGENCE WITHIN THE LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS OF THE SPD REGARDING WHAT TO DO ABOUT MBFR. SINCE THESE DIFFICULTIES NOW APPEAR TO BE FUNDAMENTAL, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE SPD WILL BE ABLE TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF UNITY ON MBFR WHEN THE BUNDESTAG DEBATE RESUMES LATER THIS MONTH.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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